

WCU Japan travel course for Summer 2019

This document provides an overview of the travel activities for the combined courses of Dr. Tyler (SM 350; SM672) and Dr. Yan (ENGR 365). The travel dates and destinations should be fairly stable, but the actual activities will change as plans are confirmed. This is a best estimate idea of what the trip will look like, but faculty will add, change, and remove activities throughout the planning process.

Depart USA, arrive Japan

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

We leave the USA on May 15, 2019. The faculty and students fly from Asheville to Japan through Atlanta. We encourage students to travel as a group, but students have the freedom to fly on a different approved itinerary and rendezvous in Tokyo (e.g., fly out of Wilmington instead of Asheville; use frequent flier miles on another airline). Typically, we'll all get on the same flight out of Atlanta, even if we leave from a different city initially.

Thursday, May 16, 2019

The flight leaves Atlanta on Wednesday and arrives into Tokyo on Thursday. The academic program begins on Thursday in Tokyo (but because of travel time needed to reach Japan, the course start date is list as Wednesday).

Tokyo

Tokyo is one of the world's most iconic cities, the commerce hub of Japan, and the primary host of the 2020 Olympic Games. Tokyo has some of our best opportunities to meet with industry professionals, and thus the time here is heavier on meetings and location tours than our other destinations.

We are still working with our hosts to finalize the meetings, but some of the possible companies/organizations in Tokyo are listed below:

- Nike (footwear and apparel)
- All Nippon Airways (ANA) (largest airline in Japan)
- Fox (television)
- Japanese Football Association (governing body for soccer)
- Nissan (automotive)
- Olympus (photography and lenses)
- Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games

Tokyo is a cosmopolitan city, but it still maintains unique cultural features. While here, students' cultural experiences include some or all of the following:

- Visit diverse districts/neighborhoods, such as Shibuya (commercial and business centre), Harajuku, Shinjuku, Odaiba (high-tech entertainment hub with exhibits), Akihabara (electronics shops), Meiji Shrine, and Ginza
- Visit Asakusa/Senso-ji to attend the annual Sanja Matsuri Festival, a huge festival celebrating the founders of a Buddhist Temple. The timing coincides with our weekend in Tokyo.
- Attend sporting events, such as sumo wrestling and baseball

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We land in evening, check into our lodging, eat dinner, conduct a local orientation, and go to bed.

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Friday, May 17, 2019

We have 1-2 meetings, then spend the day visiting neighborhoods, learning our way around Tokyo, and adjusting to the time change.

Saturday & Sunday, May 18-19, 2019

It is the weekend, so we usually do not have industry meetings other than those we can arrange with sporting event staff before/after the match.

Cultural activities, such as the Asakusa Festival, and attending sporting events such as baseball and/or Sumo wrestling.

Monday, May 20, 2019

Industry meetings and site visits.

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

Industry meetings and site visits during the day. We travel to Nagoya via bullet train (Shinkansen) in the late afternoon.

Nagoya

Nagoya is home to Chukyo University, a WCU partner institution, and the world headquarters of Toyota. Our activities primarily revolve around these two entities.

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

We arrive in evening, check into our lodging, eat dinner, and go to bed.

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Take a campus tour at Chukyo University, visit classes, and meet with local students.

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Go to Toyota headquarters in Aichi, where we take a factory tour and visit the museum.

Friday, May 24, 2019

Explore the traditional Japanese Karakuri Puppet (a mechanical robot) Craftsmanship. Tour Toyota Stadium in the Nagoya suburbs. See Chukyo laboratory for elite athletic performance. Attend a sporting event in the evening (e.g., softball, soccer).

Saturday, May 25, 2019

Take a morning bullet train for Hiroshima.

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Hiroshima

Famous for the tragic atomic bombing during World War II, modern Hiroshima is a thriving city that embraces its place in history. A highlight is the Peace Museum, one of the world's most emotionally moving and educational museums. On the sport side, the fans of the Hiroshima Carp baseball team have a reputation as the most passionate in the country.

Saturday, May 25, 2019

Arrive by midday and check into the lodging. Depending on timing, we visit the Peace Museum or take part in another cultural activity. We have dinner at the "okonomiyaki tower," a building with 7 floors of restaurants serving okonomiyaki (Japanese "pancake" cooked on a hot grill in front of you).

Sunday, May 26, 2019

Visit the Peace Museum, if we were unable to do so on Saturday. Attend a baseball or soccer match.

Monday, May 27, 2019

Visit Mazda headquarters and factory. This offers an opportunity to compare with Toyota, who we met with in Nagoya. We'll also likely meet with a sport organization in the city.

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

This is the most relaxing day of our travels. We take a day trip to visit Miyajima (Itsukushima-ji), a beautiful, iconic temple in/above the water in the Hiroshima Bay. We learn about the temple, meditation, and local history. Take the Shinkansen in the evening to Osaka.

Osaka and surrounding areas

Our final major lodging destination is Osaka, Japan's second-largest city. We have activities in Osaka, but it also serves as a centralized location for day trips to other places. We intend to do most of the activities below, though perhaps not on the exact days listed.

Like Tokyo, Osaka is a commerce hub and there are many businesses and organizations. Some possible industry meetings include Mizuno (sporting goods manufacturer) and Asics/Onitsuka (footwear), and cultural highlights are making your own noodles at the Nishin Museum, people-watching at America Mora, and karaoke.

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

We arrive in evening, check into our lodging, eat dinner, and go to bed.

Wednesday, May 29, 2019

Meetings with companies and organizations in Osaka. Visit Umeda Sky Tower in the evening.

Thursday, May 30, 2019

One meeting in the morning in Osaka, then a day trip to Nara to visit the Nara Women's University and enjoy cultural activities.

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Friday, May 31, 2019

Day trip to Kobe. Meeting with city officials to discuss regional tourism, logistics, quality and safety management, and technical support for mega-events like the Rugby World Cup (2019) and Olympics (2020).

Saturday, June 1, 2019

Students have free time during the day. We hope to attend a baseball game in the afternoon, if the Tigers are in town and we haven't seen baseball yet (or even if we have).

Sunday, June 2, 2019

Day trip to Himeji-jo Castle. Built in 1333, this is one of Japanese greatest remaining feudal castles and a UNESCO World Heritage site. Students learn about the engineering feats that were achieved to create this architectural marvel.

Monday, June 3, 2019

Take a day trip to Kyoto. Learn about materials, manufacturing, and quality control associated with sword forging artisanship. Immerse in the traditional Japanese culture in various forms, such as kimono, ocha, and cuisine.

Tuesday, June 4, 2019

The course ends on the morning of June 4, and there are no required activities on this day. Many students fly back to USA with faculty, arriving on the same day due to time difference.

Students may instead choose to extend their stay, continue to other destinations, or take an alternate itinerary home. Faculty can give feedback during to help students plan, but at this point, students are independent (or with other students in the course) and no longer considered part of the travel program. Thus, they are responsible and liable for their planning, transportation home, insurance, etc.